

NEWS RELEASE

Alabama Department of Public Safety

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STATE TROOPERS ENCOURAGE BACK-TO-SCHOOL SAFETY, *Provide School Zone, Bus Safety Reminders for Motorists*

Alabama's children are returning to school, and state troopers strongly encourage motorists to drive with extreme caution in and around school zones, bus stops and other areas where children are present, according to Public Safety Director Col. J. Christopher Murphy.

"State troopers and local officers statewide will be watchful for any traffic violations in the areas of school zones, bus stops and stopped school buses," said Murphy. "In every state, it is illegal to pass a school bus that has stopped to load or unload students. Motorists need to be observant of all the traffic laws that serve to protect our children's safety."

When meeting or following a stopped school bus, motorists must stop when the flashing signal light system is activated. School bus drivers use this system to alert drivers that the bus is going to stop to load or unload students.

Yellow flashing lights indicate the bus is preparing to stop to load or unload children. Motorists should slow down and prepare to stop their vehicles. Red flashing lights and extended stop arm indicate the bus has stopped and that children are getting on or off. Motorists must stop their cars and wait until the red flashing lights are turned off and the stop arm is withdrawn.

Alabama's school bus stop law, effective Oct. 1, 2006, requires that the driver of a vehicle — when meeting or overtaking any school bus which has stopped to receive or discharge school children on a highway, roadway, on school property, or on a private road — shall stop completely before reaching the school bus. The driver of a vehicle on a highway with four or more lanes divided by a median, which permits at least two lanes of traffic to travel in opposite directions, need not stop when meeting a school bus which is stopped in the opposing roadway.

Murphy also provided motorists with the following traffic safety rules in anticipation of the back-to-school season:

- ◆ When backing out of a driveway or leaving a garage, watch out for children walking to the bus stop or walking or bicycling to school.
- ◆ When driving in neighborhoods, especially in school zones, watch out for young people who may be thinking about getting to school, but may not be thinking about getting there safely.

for more information contact:

Public Information/Education • P.O. Box 1511 • Montgomery AL 36102-1511

(334) 242-4445 • <http://dps.alabama.gov/>

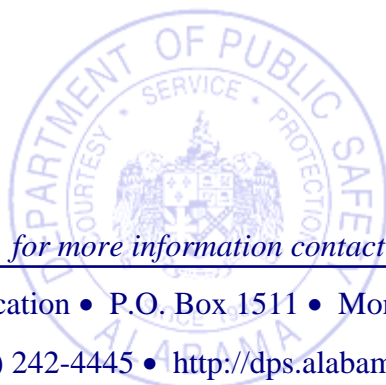
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- ◆ Slow down. Watch for children walking in the street, especially where there are no sidewalks. Watch for children playing and gathering near bus stops.
- ◆ Be alert and ready to stop. Children may dart into the street without looking for traffic.

8-08-08



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